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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 246

By  Ketron

A RESOLUTION to designate June 21, 2015, as "Arabian Horse Day" in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, Arabian horses were primarily used in the breeding of Thoroughbred racehorses prior to the twentieth century, but in the 1930s, when the Arabian horse population in the United States still numbered less than a thousand, General J. M. Dickinson became a pioneer breeder of purebred Arabian horses at his family's historic Travelers Rest Arabian Stud in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Dickinson's Travelers Rest Arabian Stud established itself quickly as one of the largest United States breeders of Arabian horses; General Dickinson became a member of the board of directors of the Arabian Horse Club of America, and by his initiative, the first National Arabian Show took place in 1933 in Nashville, in conjunction with the Tennessee State Fair; and

WHEREAS, Travelers Rest Arabian Stud had a far-reaching effect through its sale of horses across the country and internationally, as well as through the donation of stock to the U.S. Army Remount Service during World War II; between 1930 and 1950, General Dickinson sold 274 horses, mostly to middle-class buyers and army cavalry, and his efforts dispersed quality horses to working ranches, amateur show stables, and coastal patrol units; and

WHEREAS, General Dickinson was indirectly influential in the development of the sport of Arabian horseracing in the United States and was this country's first importer of Arabian horses from Poland; his influence became evident beginning in 1959, the inaugural year of U.S. Arabian horseracing, when Travelers Rest Arabian Stud was represented in the pedigrees of several early racing competitors; and

WHEREAS, despite Tennessee's rich heritage in the breeding of purebred Arabian horses, the breed was still something of an oddity even in the 1960s, until another Tennessean, Dr. Samuel Harrison of Loudon, known as Dr. Sam, took up the goal of breeding and promoting the purebred Arabian horse; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Harrison helped organize a local Arabian horse club in the late 1960s and served as its president for several years before he came to focus on Arabian horseracing; he named his farm Sa-Arabet, combining the names of Sam, Arabian, and Bettye, his wife; and

WHEREAS, Sa-Arabet consisted of a modest barn on Dr. Harrison's unpretentious cattle farm in Loudon, yet the farm's outstanding reputation extended to foreign countries; Sa-Arabet's Arabians dominated tracks in the United States into the 1990s, and descendants of Dr. Harrison's stock are still sought for breeding Arabian racehorses; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Harrison also advanced the sport of Arabian horseracing in America by creating the U.S. Arabian Jockey Club and the Arabian Racing Cup Inc., a Tennessee nonprofit corporation, and these entities helped grow Arabian horseracing into a bona fide pari-mutuel sport; and

WHEREAS, in Middle Tennessee, General Dickinson's daughter, Margaret Dickinson Fleming, known as Ms. Peggy, participated in the organization of a local club and rated Arabian horse shows, and her efforts resulted in the establishment of the Middle Tennessee Arabian Horse Association (MTAHA) in 1971; with the help of volunteers, MTAHA has annually held the Music City show (in Nashville, Shelbyville, and Murfreesboro) for over thirty years, and it remains the only Class "A" Arabian horse show in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, the designation of "Arabian Horse Day" in Tennessee will help celebrate the history of the breed and showcase its supporters and admirers, who will open their farms to share their Arabian horses with future enthusiasts; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

CONCURRING, that in honor of the breed's distinguished history in Tennessee, June 21, 2015, is designated as "Arabian Horse Day."

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.

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